



Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives

Fiscal Year 2021 Request for Applications – Current Initiatives

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-DBII-G-21-0008

Publication Date: June 28, 2021

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on August 30, 2021

Program Solicitation Information

Funding Opportunity Title: Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-DBII-G-21-0008

Announcement Type: Initial

Assistance Listing Number: 10.176

Dates: Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 30, 2021, through [Grants.gov](https://www.usda.gov/ams/grants). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Executive Summary: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2021 from existing initiatives of the Dairy Business Innovation (DBI) Initiatives program: the University of Tennessee; the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets; and the University of Wisconsin. These initiatives serve to:

- Diversify dairy product markets to reduce risk and develop higher value uses for dairy products,
- Promote business development that diversifies farmer income through processing and marketing innovation, and
- Encourage the use of regional milk production.

Approximately \$18.4 million is available in FY 2021 to fund applications under this solicitation. Initiatives are expected to perform projects from FY 2021 through FY 2024 and submit a non-competing application for each FY the DBI Initiatives are appropriated funds during this tenure.

This announcement identifies the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply.

Stakeholder Input: AMS seeks comments about this Request for Applications (RFA). We will consider the comments in developing the next RFA for the program. Email written comments within one year of the publication date of this RFA to: AMSGrants@usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the **2021 Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives RFA – Current Initiatives**.

2021 Highlights and Changes

- [H.R. 133 – the Consolidated Appropriations Act](#) (Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Stimulus Funding) provided FY21 funding for both competitive (new initiatives) and non-competitive (current initiatives) DBI awards. This RFA is for considering non-competitive applications for current initiatives.
- The RFA and [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) were updated to reflect changes in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR part 200).
- Application budgets should include travel costs to attend an AMS grant coordinators conference. See [section 4.6.5](#) for more information.

Application Checklist

AMS expects applicants to read the entire RFA prior to submitting their application to ensure that they understand the program’s requirements.

This application checklist provides the required and conditionally required documents for an application package.

DBI requires that **all application packages** include the following:

- ☐ SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (in Grants.gov)
- ☐ Project Narrative Form (including Fiscal Plan and Resources and Personnel Qualifications)
 - Ensure the required template is used
 - Ensure the executive summary is no more than 250 words
 - Ensure the Project Narrative does not exceed the page limit
 - Ensure project excludes unallowable costs and activities per [section 4.6](#)
- ☐ Signed Letter(s) of Commitment from each partner or collaborating organization at the time of application per [section 4.2.4](#)

If applicable, packages may also be required to include the following documents:

- ☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (PDF Attachment)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Funding Opportunity Description	5
1.1	Legislative Authority	5
1.2	Purpose	5
1.3	Program Description	5
2.0	Award Information	7
2.1	Type of Federal Assistance	7
2.2	Type of Applications.....	7
2.3	Available Funding.....	7
2.4	Federal Award Period Duration	7
2.5	Award Size	7
3.0	Eligibility Information	7
3.1	Eligible Applicants.....	7
3.2	Partners and Collaborators.....	8
3.3	Cost Sharing and Matching	8
4.0	Application and Submission Information	8
4.1	Electronic Application Package	8
4.2	Content and Form of Application Submission.....	8
4.3	Submission Date and Time.....	11
4.4	Submitted Application Qualification	11
4.5	Submission Date and Time.....	11
4.6	Intergovernmental Review	11
4.7	Funding Restrictions.....	11
4.8	Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements	13
5.0	Application Review Information	16
6.0	Award Administration Information.....	16
6.1	Award Notices.....	16
6.2	Administrative and National Policy Requirements	16
6.3	Reporting Requirements.....	16
7.0	Agency Contacts	17
7.1	Programmatic Questions	17
7.2	address	17
7.3	Available Resources	17
7.4	Grants.gov Questions	17
8.0	Other Information	17
8.1	Equal Opportunity Statement	17
8.2	Freedom of Information Act Requests	17
8.3	Paperwork Reduction	18

1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Dairy Business Innovation (DBI) Initiatives are authorized by section 204(b) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 as supplemented by section 12513 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115—334), ([7 U.S.C. § 1632d](#)).

1.2 PURPOSE

This program assists current DBI initiatives in managing regional efforts to support dairy businesses in the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products. These initiatives specifically focus on:

- a. Diversifying dairy product markets to reduce risk and develop higher value uses for dairy products;
- b. Promoting business development that diversifies farmer income through processing and marketing innovation; and
- c. Encouraging the use of regional milk production.

This RFA is to award funding to current initiatives from FY 2021 through 2024. See [section 2.4](#) for more information.

1.2.1 DEFINITIONS

Dairy Businesses are businesses that develop, produce, market, or distribute dairy products.

Initiatives are selected eligible entities that host this program with the purposes indicated under [section 1.2](#).

Dairy Products are products manufactured for use by humans which are derived from the processing of milk and include fluid milk products. Products may include but are not limited to butter, cheese (whether natural or processed), skim milk, cream, whey or buttermilk (whether dry, evaporated, stabilized or condensed), and frozen desserts.

1.3 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Initiatives provide direct technical assistance and make sub-grants to dairy businesses. They must also build on previous efforts to engage existing dairy industry resources, including dairy farm density and suitability, as well as activities conducted by dairy promotion and research programs (authorized by the Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983 and the Fluid Milk Promotion Act of 1990), research organizations, dairy businesses, or academic or industry stakeholders. Initiatives may serve a certain product niche, such as specialty cheese, or serve dairy businesses with dairy products derived from the milk of a specific type of dairy animal, including dairy products made from cow milk, sheep milk, and goat milk.

These initiatives also consult with any authorized dairy promotion program and AMS in carrying out the program and report on outcomes of the program as well as any related activities and opportunities to

further increase dairy innovation. Host initiatives must maintain guidelines and procedures to prevent any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest as required by [2 CFR § 400.2\(b\)](#) while providing the direct technical assistance and sub-grants to dairy businesses mentioned below.

1.3.1 DIRECT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Initiatives provide direct technical assistance to dairy businesses. Direct technical assistance includes nonmonetary assistance to dairy businesses through either private consultation or widely available distribution. Technical assistance may be provided directly through the host initiative or through industry experts or research institutions, including cooperative extension services. Specific forms of assistance may include:

- Business consulting, including business plan development for processed dairy products, strategic planning assistance, and distribution and supply chain innovation;
- Marketing and branding assistance, including market messaging, packaging innovation, consumer assessments, innovation in emerging market opportunities, and evaluation of regional, national, and international markets;
- Assistance in product innovation, including the development of value-added products, innovation in byproduct reprocessing and use maximization, and dairy product production training, including in new, rare, or innovative techniques; and
- Development or facilitation of general informational websites, webinars, conferences, trainings, plant tours, and field days.

1.3.2 SUBAWARDS TO DAIRY BUSINESSES

Initiatives facilitate and have operational responsibility to carry out a subaward program with at least 50 percent of the allotted funds. An initiative may provide a subaward to an entity that receives direct technical assistance to advance the business activities recommended, and conduct a competitive subaward program to dairy businesses that did not seek or receive direct technical assistance. The subaward program focuses on:

- a. Modernization, specialization, and grazing transition on dairy farms;
- b. Value chain and commodity innovation and facility and process updates for dairy processors; and
- c. Product development, packaging, and marketing of dairy products.

Individual subawards made by initiatives will be to new or existing dairy businesses and will not be more than \$500,000. Initiatives will prioritize entities that receive direct technical assistance referenced in [section 1.3.1](#) and are:

- Dairy farms and dairy businesses with limited access to other forms of assistance;
- Employee-owned dairy businesses;
- Cooperatives; and
- Dairy businesses that seek to create dairy products that add substantial value in processing or marketing, such as specialty cheeses.

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide the Federal award to applicants.

2.2 TYPE OF APPLICATIONS

New application. AMS will review all applications for conformance with the criteria in [section 5.0](#) and may require the applicant to provide additional information or clarification by a specified date.

2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

It is anticipated that approximately \$18.4 million will be available to fund current initiatives in FY 2021. Enactment of additional Federal continuing resolutions or appropriations may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

Projects must be completed within 3 years. It is acceptable to complete a project before the scheduled performance period end date. However, AMS encourages initiatives to take the full grant period to allow ample time to complete all sub-award projects. The project period must begin no later than October 31, 2021, and end no later than October 30, 2024. The applicant must indicate the start and end dates on the SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance" in block 17.

2.5 AWARD SIZE

Each initiative will be funded up to one-third of the available funding (see [section 2.3](#)), which is \$6,133,333.33.

If an initiative applies for less than its available amount, AMS will redistribute the remaining portion equally to the other initiatives.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are current initiatives at:

- The University of Tennessee,
- The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, and
- The University of Wisconsin.

These initiatives were competitively selected in FY 2019 to fulfill the purpose of the program (see [section 1.2](#)). This funding opportunity will continue work already started under their previous awards.

3.2 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

An applicant may subcontract or subaward with partners and collaborators. Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements listed in this RFA.

- A *partnership* is a relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.
- A *collaborator* is a person or an organization unaffiliated with the applicant that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project and is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Partners and collaborators may come from private or public, for-profit or nonprofit entities. Applicants must show evidence of existing community or industry support and engagement.

3.3 COST SHARING AND MATCHING

DBI does not have a Federal cost sharing or matching requirement.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov in response to this RFA. We urge applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see Grants.gov's [Apply for Grants](#) webpage. This RFA contains the information needed to obtain and complete required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in [section 4.8](#).

Applicants can find the opportunity under either the Assistance Listing number "10.176," or the DBI Initiatives Funding Opportunity Number "USDA-AMS-TM-DBII-G-21-0008."

4.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

4.2.1 FORM SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required: Form SF-424 is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or adequately explained in the instructions. However, applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424.

Block	Instruction
#1 Type of Submission	Application.
#2 Type of Application	New.
#4 and #5	Not applicable.
# 8c Organizational Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)	Applicant DUNS# for the Organization submitting the application. See D&B Request a DUNS Number.
#8d Address	The applicant street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code.
#10 Name of Federal Agency	AMS, USDA
#11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (Assisted Listing Number)	10.176.
#12 Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-DBII-G-21-0008.
#13 Competition Identification Number	Not applicable.
#14 Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, States affected by project.
#15 Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Provide a short description of the project.
#16a Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
#16b Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be performed. Write "All" if the projects will be performed in more than one location.
#17 Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	Start date: October 31, 2021 End date: No later than October 30, 2024.
#18 Estimated Funding	Total Federal funds requested.
#19 Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	See section 4.6.

4.2.2 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required: Applicants are required to prepare and submit a narrative using the [DBI Project Narrative form](#). The narrative must describe how this funding will build upon the work performed under previous DBI grants, including any new objectives and goals, types and sequence of project activities, monitoring and evaluation strategies associated with the proposed activities, and how the initiative will manage the project (including the subaward process).

The narrative also includes a budget narrative and justification section. A general line-item for "grants" may be provided under Contracts in the application's budget. The individual subaward budgets are not expected at the submission of this application. However, initiatives will be expected to provide a comprehensive plan detailing each subgrant project, associated outcomes, and applicable expenses in order to draw down on the funds associated with this line item.

The narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in an 11-point font, not to exceed twenty (20) pages, excluding existing form content. For example, if the form is 15 pages before you begin entering your project information, your narrative form may be up to 35 pages (15 original pages + 20 pages of applicant content). DO NOT modify the margins of the Project Narrative form. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted.

Prior to submitting the application to Grants.gov, please make sure no tracked changes or mark-up edits and comments are visible.

Applicants must submit the DBI Project Narrative form as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” on the application package.

The supporting documents in subsequent sections do not count toward the 20-page limit for the Project Narrative.

4.2.3 LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNER AND COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

Required: Applicants must provide letters of commitment from all project partners and collaborators. More information can be found on partners and collaborators in [section 3.2](#). The letter must state the partner or collaborator agrees to the project management plan presented in the Project Narrative. The Letter of Commitment must include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- A short introduction describing the partnering organization’s mission and its interest in this program’s development
- What the organization commits to participating in and supporting
- The time period of the partnership
- Roles of the participating individuals, as applicable, and any individual time commitment
- A statement that these individuals and the organization agree to abide by the management plan contained in the application

Letters of commitment must be written on partner letterhead and addressed to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are **LETTERS OF COMMITMENT**. Letters must accompany the proposal at the time of application. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. Emails will not be accepted.

Letter(s) must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under Form SF-424 item #15.

PLEASE NOTE: AMS does not require Congressional letters of support and such letters do not carry additional weight during the evaluation process.

4.2.4 NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

Required if the applicant has a NICRA: Refer to [section 4.7.1](#) for more information. The NICRA must be in PDF format **and** attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15.

4.3 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applicants must submit applications via [Grants.gov](#) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 30, 2021. AMS cannot consider applications received after this deadline for funding. See [AMS' Policy on Late Applications](#).

4.4 SUBMITTED APPLICATION QUALIFICATION

Your application **may not be reviewed or considered for funding** if it is:

- Received by Grants.gov after the submission deadline;
- Submitted via any method other than through Grants.gov;
- Submitted to the wrong grant program; or
- Not responsive to the requirements of this RFA (eligibility, incomplete application, not providing all required documents, etc.).

See [AMS' Late and/or Non-Responsive Applications Policy](#) for more information.

4.5 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Ensure that all components of the application are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. AMS encourages you to submit your application at least two weeks prior to the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.

Only applications submitted and validated by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on August 30, 2021, to Grants.gov will be accepted. See [AMS' Late and/or Non-Responsive Applications Policy](#).

4.6 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials.

4.7 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

4.7.1 INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”—defined at [2 CFR § 200.1](#)) are those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

As stated in the regulations ([2 CFR §§ 200.413](#) and [414](#)), any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except State and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in [2 CFR § 200.403](#), costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology

once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a recipient chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the recipient may apply to do at any time.

All applicants who elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must use the MTDC as the base. MTDC are defined in [2 CFR § 200.1](#) as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDCs exclude equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may be excluded only when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

If an applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate approved by its cognizant agency, the applicant must submit a copy of its approved NICRA with its application. Entities that would like to negotiate an indirect cost rate must contact their cognizant agency. For assignments of cognizant agencies see [2 CFR § 200.1](#).

4.7.2 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

All AMS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing this document should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under [section 7.0](#).

4.7.3 SUBAWARD ALLOCATION

At least 50 percent of this DBI grant must be allocated to subawards.

4.7.4 COORDINATOR MEETING TRAVEL

Recipients are expected to attend an AMS sponsored grants management meeting during the project's period of performance. The proposed budget should include travel funds for the Project Coordinator and any additional key personnel as reasonably determined by the recipient and AMS.

4.7.5 SUPPLANTING

The funds awarded through this RFA must increase, expand, or replace, and not duplicate, existing activities of the host initiatives.

4.7.6 SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC DAIRY BUSINESSES

Technical assistance and subawards will not be made available to a foreign person making direct investment in the United States, as defined in [15 CFR § 801.2](#), where the assistance is provided to a specific dairy business and is not publicly available.

4.8 GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.8.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

The registration process can take **up to four weeks** to complete. Therefore, complete your registration allowing sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

- 1) *Obtain a DUNS Number:* All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a [Data Universal Numbering System \(DUNS\) number](#) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the SF-424 form.
- 2) *Register with SAM:* In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#). All organizations must register with SAM to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an active SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.**
- 3) *Create a Grants.gov Account:* The next step in the registration process is to [create an account with Grants.gov](#). Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, the EBiz POC will need to identify and assign an individual to the AOR role.
- 4) *Authorize Grants.gov Roles:* After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and [authorize the appropriate roles](#), including the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.
- 5) *Track Role Status:* After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you [to track your status](#).

b. *Electronic Signature:* When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as AORs. **This step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

4.8.2 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO AMS VIA GRANTS.GOV

Applicants may use the Grants.gov Workspace, a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a Workspace.

- 1) *Create a Workspace*: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.
 - a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, and then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: You may need to visit the [Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov](#) to download the appropriate version of the software.
 - b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms*: Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.
 - c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 form information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- 3) *Submit a Workspace*: Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting the application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the due date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in [section 4.2](#) are included.

- 4) *Track a Workspace*: After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXX) to the package, which will be listed on the Confirmation page generated after submission.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides additional [training resources, including video tutorials](#).

Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number that you and Grants.gov can refer to if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the person(s) mentioned in [section 7.0](#).

4.8.3 TIMELY RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF TIMELY SUBMISSION

All applications must be received by the due date established in [section 4.3](#). Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov using an electronic date/time stamp generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When AMS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will electronically acknowledge receipt of the application to the applicant AOR's email address. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the email from Grants.gov stating the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS.

AMS will not accept applications packages by fax, email, or postal mail. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS. See [AMS' Policy on Late Applications](#).

Special Note for Applicants with Slow Internet Connections. Applicants using slow internet connections, such as dial-up connections, may experience significantly longer transmission times when submitting their application to Grants.gov, especially if there are large attachments contained in the upload. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

4.8.4 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- Register and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE.**
- Thoroughly read this RFA and follow all the instructions provided by AMS.
- Thoroughly review the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) to understand allowable and unallowable costs.
- Apply for the correct grant program
 - Assistance Listing number “**10.176**” and Funding Opportunity Number “**USDA-AMS-TM-DBII-G-21-0008**”
- Make sure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with [Grants.gov](#) software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher.
- Limit Application File Name Characters (50 or less).
- When uploading attachments, click the “Add Attachments” button (do NOT use the “paperclip” icon in Adobe Reader).

- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are “accepted”.
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names (\$, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- Input the correct DUNS number on the SF-424 cover page.
- Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

This is a non-competitive RFA restricted to current DBI awardees listed in [section 3.1](#). AMS will review each project narrative to ensure that it meets the statutory purpose of the program, all application criteria are fulfilled in accordance with [section 4.0](#), and all costs are allowable.

AMS will notify the individual listed on the SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance” in block 8f if additional information is required after the initial review of the application. AMS will work with applicants to negotiate any revisions if necessary and possible. Failure to provide requested information in a timely manner may result in a project not receiving funding.

6.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send a Notice of Award and Grant Agreement to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. Grant Agreements consist of a 1-page Agreement Face Sheet (AMS-33) that will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The Notice of Award and Grant Agreement will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR § 200.211](#) and a reference to the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

6.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

All AMS grant agreements include the AMS General Terms and Conditions as part of the Notice of Award and Grant Agreement. More information is provided in the most recent version of the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) under the *Administrative and National Policy Requirements* section.

6.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting and award closeout requirements are included in the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those will be identified in the award.

7.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

7.1 PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

After closely reviewing this RFA in its entirety, applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact the DBI staff by e-mail with questions about the grant program at IPPGGrants@usda.gov.

For additional information, please visit the DBI Website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/dbi>.

7.2 ADDRESS

Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives

USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Room 2055 South Building

Stop 0201

Washington, DC 20250-0264

www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/dbi

7.3 AVAILABLE RESOURCES

AMS provides resources and information on the DBI website (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/dbi>) that may be helpful to applicants, including descriptions of funded projects, and required application forms.

7.4 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's [Applicant Support](#).

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

8.2 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 ([5 U.S.C. § 552](#)) (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 U.S.C. § 552a](#)), as implemented by USDA's regulations ([7 CFR part 1, Subpart A](#)) govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to their records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 1671-S, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0273, Telephone: (202) 302-0650; or email: AMS.FOIA@usda.gov.

8.3 PAPERWORK REDUCTION

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. 3501](#)), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0240. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.